



**Development of New Methods for the
Synthesis of Plasmonically-Active
Precious Metal Rods and Shells**

A thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family; past, present and future.

Certificate of Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Edgar', is written over two horizontal lines.

Jonathan A. Edgar

10/10/2011

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Abstract

The ability to synthesise metal nanoparticles with various geometries has vastly improved in recent years. The plasmon resonance, the mechanism responsible for the optical response of metal nanoparticles, is highly sensitive to their geometry. This is the primary reason for the current interest in developing syntheses that produce a distinct geometry. In contrast, polydisperse samples of nanoparticles have relatively poorly defined plasmon resonances. Although nanospheres are still the most common geometry of metal nanoparticle synthesised, there is rapidly increasing interest in nanorods and nanoshells on account of their more flexible optical response. Therefore, developing a reliable synthesis for nanorods and nanoshells has been a target of much recent research. Gold is the most popular metal for the synthesis of plasmonically active nanoparticles.

In this thesis I present a development of synthesis methods for plasmonically active nanoparticles and a characterisation of the resulting products. In my work I have synthesised gold nanorods, a mixed dispersion of gold nanorings and hollow gold nanoparticles, silver nanorods and platinum nanospheres. To characterise these nanoparticles I have used a range of techniques including UV-Vis-NIR spectrometry, SEM, TEM, cryo-TEM, SAXS and electrodynamics simulations.

Early in my work I recognised that gold nanorods provided the best opportunities to achieve large scale applications. Some significant drawbacks in the existing methods of synthesis were identified, such as the inefficient reaction of gold. This realisation led me to focus the majority of my efforts on improving the understanding of the mechanisms involved in the synthesis of gold nanorods and, in particular, on the all-important transition from spherical seed particle to anisotropic rod. The nearest competitor to nanorods, with respect to applications, is nanoshells and so I have also compared these two geometries in the literature review.

From the exhaustive work presented in this thesis I present a set of optimum conditions for the synthesis of gold nanorods. Evidence for the disproportionation of gold (I) bromide as the mechanism of gold metal formation in the gold nanorod synthesis is presented. I also show that it is necessary to sacrifice control of the aspect ratio of the nanorods produced in order to improve the efficiency of the reaction. I use a co-reductant to show that the formation of nanorods is dependent on the effectiveness of the reductant that is present after the addition of the gold nanoparticle seeds. It is also apparent that it is possible to achieve a range of aspect ratios as well as particle dimensions by varying the amount of seed particles added to the growth solution.

I have used a range of experimental techniques including cryo-TEM, SEM, UV-Vis spectroscopy and small angle X-ray scattering to probe the physical dimensions and optical properties of gold nanorods at various stages of their growth and from this I have developed a new growth model. Simulations of the optical properties of the intermediate nanoparticle geometries observed support this new growth model.

Table of Contents

Dedication	i
Certificate of Originality	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
List of Publications	viii
List of Abbreviations	ix
List of Figures	xii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Trends in Metal Nanoparticle Research	5
1.2 Optical Properties of Metal Nanoparticles	8
1.2.1 Optical Response of Metals	9
1.2.2 Gold Nanorods and Gold Nanoshells	12
1.2.3 Modelling Optical Response of User Defined Targets	16
1.3 Gold Nanorod Syntheses	19
1.3.1 The Development of Gold Nanorod Syntheses	19
1.3.2 Kinetics of gold nanorod syntheses	28
1.4 Gold Nanoshell Syntheses	30
1.4.1 Core – Shell Structures	30
1.4.2 Hollow Gold Nanoshells	32
1.5 Applications of Gold Nanorods and Nanoshells	32
1.5.1 Pigments and colorants	32
1.5.2 Spectrally selective coatings	33
1.5.3 High density data storage	35
1.5.4 Catalysis	36
1.5.5 Sensors	37
1.5.6 Surface Enhanced Raman spectroscopy	39
1.5.7 Use of gold in medical diagnostics	41
1.5.8 Therapeutic possibilities for nanoscale gold	44
1.6 Motivation	46
2 Experimental Methods and Materials	48
2.1 Synthesis of H _{AuCl} ₄	48
2.2 Precious Metal Nanoparticles	48

2.2.1	Gold Nanoparticle Seed Solution	48
2.2.2	Gold Nanorod Growth Solution	49
2.2.3	Gold Nanorings/Hollow Nanoparticles	50
2.2.4	Ag Nanorods.....	50
2.2.5	Platinum Nanoparticles.....	51
2.3	Characterisation and Calibration	52
2.3.1	Characterisation of Au(III) species	52
2.3.2	Calibration of Au ⁰ Concentration in Aqueous Solution.....	53
2.3.3	UV-Vis-NIR Spectroscopy	54
2.3.4	SEM	54
2.3.5	Cryo-TEM.....	55
2.3.6	TEM	56
2.3.7	Estimation of nanorod dimensions from a UV-Vis-NIR spectrum	56
2.3.8	Small-Angle X-Ray Scattering	57
2.4	Simulation of Optical Properties.....	58
2.4.1	DDSCAT	58
2.4.2	MiePlot.....	62
2.5	POV-Ray Diagrams of Gold Nanoparticles	62
3	Other Precious Metal Colloids	64
3.1	Gold Nanorings	64
3.1.1	Results and Discussion	66
3.1.2	Summary	71
3.2	Silver Nanorods.....	72
3.2.1	Results and Discussion	73
3.2.2	Summary	74
3.3	Platinum Nanoparticles.....	76
3.3.1	Results and Discussion	77
3.3.2	Summary	78
4	Optimisation of the synthesis of gold nanorods.....	80
4.1	Results and Discussion	81
4.1.1	Ag ⁺ concentration	81
4.1.2	C ₁₆ TABr concentration	82
4.1.3	Gold Source	83

4.1.4	Mechanism of Reduction	84
4.1.5	Sodium Salicylate as a Co-reductant.....	90
4.1.6	Gold Nanoparticle Seed	99
4.1.7	Summary	113
5	On the Formation of Gold Nanorods	115
5.1	Results and Discussion	117
5.1.1	UV-Vis-NIR Spectroscopy	117
5.1.2	Estimation of nanorod dimensions from a UV-Vis-NIR spectrum	121
5.1.3	Small-Angle X-ray Scattering.....	123
5.1.4	Cryo-TEM and SEM	127
5.1.5	Simulated Optical Properties for New Growth Model.....	133
5.1.6	Summary	138
6	Conclusions	140
	Future Work.....	141
	References	142
	Appendices.....	162
	Appendix A.....	162
	Appendix B.....	164
	Appendix C.....	169
	Appendix D.....	171
	Appendix E	172
	Appendix F	173

List of Publications

Portions of the work presented in this thesis have been published, contributed to or have been submitted for publication. The following is a list of the citations for these publications:

Jonathan A. Edgar, Hadi M. Zareie, Martin G. Blaber, Annette Dowd, Michael B. Cortie

“Synthesis of hollow gold nanoparticles and rings using silver templates”

2008 International Conference on Nanoscience and Nanotechnology **2008**, 36-39.

Jonathan A. Edgar, Michael B. Cortie

“Nanotechnological Applications of Gold Nanoparticles”

Gold: Science and applications. CRC Press: **2009**; p 369-397.

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“Transmitting hertzian optical nanoantenna with free-electron feed”

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“On the mechanism of formation of gold nanorods”

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List of Abbreviations

$^1\text{H-NMR}$	nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy
A^*	ascorbate radical
Ag or Ag^0	silver metal
Ag^+	silver ion
AgBr	silver bromide
AgNO_3	silver nitrate
AMMRF	Australian microscopy and microanalysis research facility
AR	aspect ratio
Au or Au^0	gold metal
Au_2S	gold sulphide
Au^{3+}	gold (III) ion
AuBr_2^-	gold (I) bromide
AuBr_4^-	gold (III) bromide
AuCl_2^-	gold (I) chloride
AuCl_4^-	gold (III) chloride
BDAC	hexadecyl-benzyltrimethyl-ammonium chloride
BH_4^-	borohydride
Br^-	bromide
BSA	bovine serum albumin
BT	bow-tie
C_{16}TABr	hexadecyltrimethylammonium bromide
C_{16}TACl	hexadecyltrimethylammonium chloride
$\text{C}_{16}\text{TASBr}$	AgBr - C_{16}TABr complex
$\text{C}_{16}\text{TEABr}$	hexadecyl-triethylammonium bromide
CBT	conically-capped bow-tie
CC	conically-capped cylinder
CCG	complex conjugate gradient
CdSe-ZnS	cadmium selenide - zinc sulphide
CM	Clausius-Mossotti
CMC	critical micelle concentration
cryo-TEM	cryogenic transmission electron microscopy
DDA	discrete dipole approximation
DHA	dehydro-ascorbic acid
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
EM	electromagnetic
et alii	and others'
EXAFS	extended X-ray absorption fine structure
fastSPS	fast single-particle spectroscopy
FCC	face centred cubic
FE-SEM	field emission - scanning electron microscope
FFT	fast Fourier transform
FOM	figure of merit
FTIR	Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy

GM	Göppert-Mayer units
GS	growth solution
H ₂ A	ascorbic acid
H ₂ PtCl ₆	hexachloroplatinic acid
HA ⁻	ascorbate anion
HAuBr ₄	tetrabromoauric acid
HAuCl ₄	tetrachloroauric acid
HCl	hydrochloric acid
HDT	hexadecanethiol
HNO ₃	nitric acid
ICP-MS	inductively coupled plasma - mass spectrometry
IR	infrared
ITO	indium tin oxide
KBH ₄	potassium borohydride
LDR	lattice dispersion relation
LSP	localised surface plasmon
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
Na ₂ S	sodium sulphide
NaBr	sodium bromide
NaOH	sodium hydroxide
NaSal	sodium salicylate
NiPAAm	N-isopropylacrylamide
NIR	near infrared
NP	nanoparticle
OCT	optical coherence tomography
OH	hydroxide
PC	personal computer
PTFE	polytetrafluoroethylene
PVA	poly-vinyl alcohol
PVP	polyvinylpyrrolidone
QDs	quantum dots
RIU	refractive index unit
rpm	revolutions per minute
SALDI-MS	surface-assisted laser desorption/ionisation time-of-flight mass spectrometry
SAXS	small angle X-ray scattering
SC	spherically-capped cylinder
SEM	scanning electron microscopy
SERS	surface enhanced Raman scattering
SHE	standard hydrogen electrode
SiO ₂	silicon dioxide
SPIO	super-paramagnetic iron oxide
SPP	surface plasmon polariton
TC ₁₂ ABr	tetradodecylammonium bromide

TC ₈ ABr	tetraoctylammonium bromide
TEM	transmission electron microscopy
TGA	thermogravimetric analysis
TPL	two-photon induced luminescence
UPD	underpotential deposition
UV	ultraviolet
Vis	visible
WAXS	wide angle X-ray scattering
XPS	X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Roman ‘Lycurgus Cup’ from 4 th century AD photographed in a) reflected light and b) transmitted light.	2
Figure 1-2 Scifinder Scholar analysis for reviews of “metal nanoparticles” subdivided by keyword	6
Figure 1-3 Scifinder Scholar analysis for metal nanoparticle research publications refined for precious metals	6
Figure 1-4 Scifinder Scholar analysis for a) “gold nanorod(s)” and b) “gold nanoshell(s)” research publications subdivided by keyword.....	7
Figure 1-5 Schematic of a plasmon-polariton dipole resonance in a gold nanoparticle	8
Figure 1-6 a) Real and b) imaginary parts of the dielectric function for gold from various sources	10
Figure 1-7 A typical gold nanorod absorption spectrum indicating primary features	12
Figure 1-8 Gold nanorods in PVA film.....	13
Figure 1-9 Hybridisation model for dipolar resonance modes of a metal nanoshell	14
Figure 1-10 Typical spectra of a) large and b) small nanoshells	15
Figure 1-11 Structural representation of C ₁₆ TABr.....	20
Figure 1-12 Face-centred cubic crystal bounded by the planes with normal vectors a) $\langle 1\ 0\ 0 \rangle$, b) $\langle 1\ 1\ 0 \rangle$ and c) $\langle 1\ 1\ 1 \rangle$. d) Previously proposed crystallographic structure of a single crystal gold nanorod.	21
Figure 1-13 Face-centred cubic crystal (10 x 10 unit cells) bounded by the planes with normal vectors a) $\langle 0\ 2\ 5 \rangle$, b) $\langle 0\ 5\ 2 \rangle$ where c) illustrates the surface atoms of b). d) Currently proposed crystallographic structure of a single crystal gold nanorod.	22
Figure 1-14 Cross-section of a gold nanoshell on a dielectric core	30
Figure 1-15 Silica – gold (core – shell) nanoshells with increased exposure to growth solution (left to right and top to bottom). Scale bar = 20 nm.	31
Figure 1-16 Galvanic replacement of silver nanocubes with a) AuCl ₂ ⁻ and b) AuCl ₄ ⁻	32
Figure 1-17 ASTM E971-88 standard solar spectrum and photo-optic response of the human eye	33
Figure 1-18 Demonstration of five dimensional data storage using gold nanorods with wavelength indicated on the left, two-photon luminescence intensity on the right and polarisation indicated below.	36
Figure 2-1 Calibration of AuBr ₄ ⁻ extinction in aqueous C ₁₆ TABr solution	52
Figure 2-2 Calibration for Au ⁰ in solution	53
Figure 2-3 Nanoparticle cross-sections of the geometries calculated for my new growth model indicating the parameters used to define the structure. a) Bow-tie (BT), b) conically-capped bow-tie (CBT), c) conically-capped cylinder and d) spherically-capped cylinder.....	60
Figure 2-4 Extinction spectra for the intermediate nanoparticle geometries calculated using DDSCAT.....	60
Figure 2-5 Gold nanorod with $\langle 052 \rangle$, $\langle 025 \rangle$ and $\langle 011 \rangle$ side facets, $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ end-caps and the growth direction $\langle 100 \rangle$	63

Figure 3-1 Schematic for the formation of a hollow Au/Ag nanoparticle by the galvanic replacement of a silver nanoparticle template. Modified from [142].	65
Figure 3-2 Spectra for nanoparticles pre- and post addition of HAuCl_4	66
Figure 3-3 a) Low and b) high resolution TEM images of gold nanorings. Scale bars 50 nm and 10 nm for a) and b) respectively. Images courtesy of Dr A. Dowd.	67
Figure 3-4 SEM image of gold nanorings and cages. Scale bar = 50 nm.	67
Figure 3-5 Gold nanoparticles prepared by galvanic replacement of silver nanoparticles stabilised with citrate and C_{16}TABr molecules respectively.	68
Figure 3-6 SEM images of nanorings prepared from a) citrate stabilised and b) C_{16}TABr stabilised silver nanoparticles. Scale bars = 20 nm.	69
Figure 3-7 Diagrams of gold nanorings with aspect ratios equal to a) 3, b) 4 and c) 5 respectively. d) Corresponding extinction spectra for dispersions of gold nanorings of different aspect ratios calculated with DDSCAT	69
Figure 3-8 Gold nanoring oriented in the YZ plane (grey area) with incident EM wave travelling in the +X direction and polarised in the Z axis	70
Figure 3-9 Plasmon resonance peaks for an aspect ratio 3 gold nanoring in various orientations. The traces are labelled for the respective plane of orientation and incident polarisation of incident light for a wave propagating in the x direction	70
Figure 3-10 Comparison of the imaginary part of the complex dielectric functions for silver and gold. Data from reference [295].	72
Figure 3-11 UV-Vis spectra of C_{16}TABr and tri-sodium citrate-stabilised silver seed particles.	73
Figure 3-12 Absorbance spectra for silver nanorods a) synthesised in the current work using different volumes of CTAB stabilised silver seed particles and b) literature procedure using citrate stabilised seed particles.	74
Figure 3-13 Comparison of the imaginary part of the complex dielectric functions for platinum and gold.	76
Figure 3-14 Measured extinction spectrum of platinum nanoparticles synthesised in water compared with the MiePlot result for a 1 nm diameter platinum nanosphere and various mixtures of 1 nm and 100 nm diameter spheres, also in water	77
Figure 3-15 Measured extinction spectrum of platinum nanoparticles synthesised in toluene compared with the MiePlot result for a 1 nm diameter platinum nanosphere also in toluene.	78
Figure 4-1 Increasing the silver nitrate concentration in the gold nanorod growth solution produces a proportional shift of the longitudinal plasmon peak.	81
Figure 4-2 Varying the C_{16}TABr concentration of the gold nanorod growth solution shows a dependence of the sample quality on the elevated concentration.	82
Figure 4-3 UV-Vis absorbance spectra of $\text{Au(III)} - \text{C}_{16}\text{TA}^+$ solutions indicating that the gold species present in the gold nanorod growth solution is $\text{AuBr}_4^- - \text{CTA}^+$.	83
Figure 4-4 Absorbance spectra of nanorods prepared with HAuBr_4 and HAuCl_4	84
Figure 4-5 a) Concentration of Au^{3+} measured by UV-Vis spectrometry for solutions with ascorbic acid approaching 1:1 with respect to initial Au^{3+} concentration b) Cryo-TEM image of solution of $\text{Au}^{3+} - \text{C}_{16}\text{TABr}$ and ascorbic acid, scale bar = 50 nm.	85

Figure 4-6 Oxidation and degradation pathways for ascorbic acid	85
Figure 4-7 Au^{3+} - ascorbate complex.....	86
Figure 4-8 Schematic of the disproportionation mechanism of AuBr_2^- at the surface of a gold nanoparticle	88
Figure 4-9 a) Proportional increase of metallic gold concentration to excess reductant concentration in gold nanorod samples and b) corresponding longitudinal peak positions	88
Figure 4-10 Nanoparticle spectra for samples in Figure 4-9 where growth solutions contain $50\ \mu\text{M}\ \text{Ag}^+$ and ascorbic acid as the sole excess reductant	89
Figure 4-11 Nanoparticle spectra for samples in Figure 4-9 where growth solutions contain $100\ \mu\text{M}\ \text{Ag}^+$ and ascorbic acid as the sole excess reductant	90
Figure 4-12 a) Structure of the salicylate anion with intramolecular hydrogen bond indicated, b) probable structure of the salicylate di-anion and c) insertion of the salicylate anion into a C_{16}TABr micelle	90
Figure 4-13 UV-Vis kinetics data for the interaction of sodium salicylate with $\text{AuBr}_4^- - \text{C}_{16}\text{TABr}$ at 30°C , dashed arrows indicate increasing time, solid arrows indicate isosbestic points. Inset shows decrease of Au^{3+} concentration with time.....	91
Figure 4-14 a) Combinations of NaSal and Au^+ - and $\text{Au}^{3+} - \text{C}_{16}\text{TABr}$ spectra and b) effect of water on the spectrum of salicylate anion in acetonitrile (arrow indicates increasing concentration of water)	92
Figure 4-15 Integrated rate law plots for kinetics of the reaction of NaSal and Au^{3+}	92
Figure 4-16 Nanoparticle spectra for samples in Figure 4-9 where growth solutions contain $70\ \mu\text{M}\ \text{Ag}^+$ and sodium salicylate as the excess reductant, traces are labelled according to NaSal concentration.....	95
Figure 4-17 By varying the order of addition of reactants for nanorod growth solutions containing H_2A and NaSal as reductants a dependence of ascorbate as the excess reductant is evident	95
Figure 4-18 a) – e) SEM images of nanoparticles formed with a) and b) $0.25\ \text{mM}$, c) $0.50\ \text{mM}$, d) $1.00\ \text{mM}$ and e) $2.00\ \text{mM}$ NaSal in their respective growth solutions (all scale bars are $100\ \text{nm}$). f) Corresponding normalised absorbance spectra for samples a) – e)	97
Figure 4-19 a) – g) SEM images of nanoparticles formed with a) $5.00\ \text{mM}$, b) $10.00\ \text{mM}$, c) $20.00\ \text{mM}$, d) $50.00\ \text{mM}$, e) $100.00\ \text{mM}$, f) $250.00\ \text{mM}$ and g) $500.00\ \text{mM}$ NaSal in their respective growth solutions. h) corresponding normalised absorbance spectra for samples a) – g). Scale bars a) – c), f) and g) are $200\ \text{nm}$, d) and e) are $100\ \text{nm}$	99
Figure 4-20 Absorbance spectra for seed solutions with a) $0.1\ \text{mM}$ and b) $0.5\ \text{mM}\ \text{HAuCl}_4$ and a range of concentrations of C_{16}TABr	100
Figure 4-21 UV-Vis absorbance spectra of gold nanoparticle seed solutions prepared at different Au^{3+} concentrations	101
Figure 4-22 a) – f) SEM images for samples prepared using seed solutions with $0.1\ \text{mM}\ \text{HAuCl}_4$ and a) $0.5\ \text{mM}$, b) $1.0\ \text{mM}$, c) $10.0\ \text{mM}$, d) $25.0\ \text{mM}$, e) $50\ \text{mM}$ and f) $100.0\ \text{mM}\ \text{C}_{16}\text{TABr}$ respectively. g) Corresponding normalised absorbance spectra for a) – f). h) Nanorod dimensions for a) – f). Scale bars = $200\ \text{nm}$	102

Figure 4-23 a) – f) SEM images for samples prepared using seed solutions with 0.5 mM HAuCl_4 and a) 0.5 mM, b) 1.0 mM, c) 10.0 mM, d) 25.0 mM, e) 50 mM and f) 100.0 mM C_{16}TABr respectively. g) Corresponding normalised absorbance spectra for a) – f). h) Nanorod dimensions for a) – f). Scale bars = 200 nm.....	103
Figure 4-24 a) – e) SEM images for samples a) A1, b) B1, c) C1, d) D1 and e) E1. f) Corresponding absorbance spectra for samples A1 – E1. The inset of f) shows the nanorod dimensions measured from the SEM images. Scale bars = 200 nm.....	105
Figure 4-25 a) – e) SEM images for samples a) A2, b) B2, c) C2, d) D2 and e) E2. f) Corresponding absorbance spectra for samples A2 – E2. The inset of f) shows the nanorod dimensions measured from the SEM images. Scale bars = 200 nm.....	107
Figure 4-26 a) – e) SEM images for samples a) A3, b) B3, c) C3, d) D3 and e) E3. f) Corresponding absorbance spectra for samples A3 – E3. The inset of f) shows the nanorod dimensions measured from the SEM images. Scale bars = 200 nm.....	108
Figure 4-27 a) – e) SEM images for samples a) A4, b) B4, c) C4, d) D4 and e) E4. f) Corresponding absorbance spectra for samples A4 – E4. The inset of f) shows the nanorod dimensions measured from the SEM images. Scale bars a), d) and e) are 200 nm, b) and c) are 100 nm.....	109
Figure 4-28 a) – e) SEM images for samples a) A5, b) B5, c) C5, d) D5 and e) E5. f) Corresponding absorbance spectra for samples A5 – E5. The inset of f) shows the nanorod dimensions measured from the SEM images. Scale bar for a) is 50 nm, scale bars for b) – e) are 200 nm	111
Figure 4-29 Apparent quartic relationship for nanorod dimensions prepared from varied seed solutions. Green triangles indicate optimum range A3 – E3.....	112
Figure 4-30 Comparison of optically and physically (from SEM data) determined gold nanorod aspect ratios.....	112
Figure 4-31 a) Real and b) imaginary parts of the dielectric data for gold from Palik and CRC Handbook of Chemistry and Physics	113
Figure 5-1 UV-Vis-NIR spectroscopy of the reaction kinetics of gold nanorods. Density plots for gold nanorods with a) 0.60 mM and b) 0.65 mM H_2A in the growth solution respectively. The scale of these plots has been normalised to the maximum absorbance of the 0.65 mM dataset. Time-dependent, two-dimensional absorbance plots indicating the transition of the longitudinal resonance peak for gold nanorods with c) 0.60 mM and d) 0.65 mM H_2A in the growth solution respectively. The insets in c) and d) are an enlargement of the earliest traces for each respective dataset. The arrows indicate increasing time.....	117
Figure 5-2 Au^0 concentration as a function of time for growing gold nanorod solutions with 0.60 mM and 0.65 mM H_2A in the growth solution respectively.	119
Figure 5-3 Second order autocatalytic growth model applied to the measured optical absorbance data for the growth of gold nanorods.....	121
Figure 5-4 Physical properties of growing gold nanorods interpreted from UV-Vis spectra a) volume and b) length (L) and width (W).....	122

Figure 5-5 Particle dimensions estimated from optical data for the growth of gold nanorods with 0.60 mM H ₂ A in the growth solution using a 2 nm (2 nm D) or 3 nm (3 nm D) diameter nanoparticle seed.	122
Figure 5-6 a) Raw SAXS data of a typical gold nanorod growth solution (GS) and during nanorod growth at various times. b) SAXS profiles of the kinetics data using the GS profile as a background signal.	124
Figure 5-7 Guinier plots for SAXS data of a growing gold nanorod solution where the profile for the growth solution has been used as a background.	125
Figure 5-8 Analysis of SAXS data using $I(q)q^4$ vs q plot indicating Porod plateau (green shaded region).	126
Figure 5-9 Cryo-TEM images of samples of a growing gold nanorod solution with 0.65 mM H ₂ A taken at a) 2.5 min, b) 15 min, c) 25 min and d) 24 hours. Scale bars for a) – c) are equal to 10 nm and d) is equal to 50 nm. Arrows indicate fine gold particles with dimensions expected of seed particles.	129
Figure 5-10 Cryo-TEM images of samples of a growing gold nanorod solution with 0.60 mM H ₂ A taken at a) 13.5 min, b) 19 min, c) 29 min and d) 38 min. Scale bars for a) – d) are equal to 20 nm. The arrow indicates fine gold particles with dimensions expected of seed particles.	130
Figure 5-11 Percentage of metallic gold (with respect to the final concentration) during the growth of gold nanorods with 0.60 mM and 0.65 mM H ₂ A, respectively.	131
Figure 5-12 SEM images of samples of growing gold nanorods taken at a) 5-7 min, b) 10-12 min and c) 30-32 min. Scale bars = 100 nm. The arrow in a) indicates fine gold particles with dimensions expected of seed particles.	133
Figure 5-13 Refinement of the transverse resonance peak in the later stages of a growing gold nanorod solution. The arrows indicate increasing time.	134
Figure 5-14 Nanoparticle geometries used for DDA simulations. a) – c) Intermediate nanoparticle geometries modelled from observations in cryo-TEM images. d) Final nanorod geometry.	135
Figure 5-15 Volume-normalised, DDA simulated extinction spectra of intermediate nanoparticle geometries modelled on TEM observations. Green dashed arrow indicates growth direction. Black solid arrows link diagrams of nanoparticles with their corresponding extinction spectrum.	135
Figure 5-16 a) Experimentally measured absorbance spectrum of a growing gold nanorod solution with 0.65 mM H ₂ A in the growth solution. b) Distributions of simulated nanoparticle spectra combined according to several rules to mimic experimental spectra in a). c) Comparison of the peak positions for the experimental and simulated data in a) and b) respectively.	137